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Week 4  
Multiple Intelligences  
Tomei (ed), Lawrence A.. "Chapter M - Maslow in the Digital Age—Multiple Intelligences". Encyclopedia of Information Technology Curriculum Integration. IGI Global. © 2008. Books24x7. <http://common.books24x7.com.dml.regis.edu/book/id\_18674/book.asp> (accessed September 19, 2010)

Multiple Intelligences

The article begins with a summary of the history of multiple intelligence theory that traces its lineage from the mid-19th century all the way to Gardner’s “new paradigm”. One point that I greatly appreciated, and agree with, is that it is Gardner’s belief that we should not simply cater to intelligences that our students are strong in, but should instead nurture those they are weak in. I agree with the author that this is a very common misconception that seems to pervade our culture and education system. The article, however, does not, nor should it, discuss who should be making the decision of how much nurturing is enough. In other words, if a student does not have a strong mathematical/logical intelligence, at what point do we say they have been nurtured enough? When they can perform simple algebra? Prove theorems in geometry? Solve derivatives in calculus? Perform as much as they can as well as they can in the span of 13 years? Again, I don’t think it was the article’s place to discuss this question, but it is an interesting one nonetheless.

The second part of the article offers three ways to bring technology into the room that offer the possibility of engaging multiple intelligences. The first mentioned is a webquest. I agree with the author that webquest activities are often poorly thought-out/executed with only a couple of students doing the work or with only the strong writers doing the writing, more visual-spatial doing any lay-out work, etc. My thought is this can be counteracted through careful planning and the assignment and rotation of jobs. Through the assignment and rotation of jobs over a set of webquests, students are assured opportunities at exercising their different intelligences during such activities.

The second way mentioned was disseminating information through the use of multimedia. Again, I agree with the author that information overload is a great concern. I also think, too, that the author tucks a sentence away that should have been given more prominence: “Furthermore, giving the learners control over their media's presentation speed can also reduce cognitive overload (Mayer, 2001).” To me, this is extremely important. My experience has shown that the more control we can give kids over their learning, the more meaningful their experiences will be, which will lead to greater retention and maintain or increase their motivation to learn more. Also, by giving kids control over the pace, they will be able to build better skills at discerning what is important and what can be discarded. In today’s world of multimedia bombardment a skill such as that is necessary and should be developed as early as possible.

The third mechanism the article discusses is online collaboration. I understand what the author means by online communications generally being devoid of contextual clues we get with face-to-face communication. My experiences with online communication have lead me to be very careful with word choice and being sure my tone is either crystal clear, or it is accompanied with some demarcation that what was said was said either as a joke or in all seriousness. I do believe teaching kids basic netiquette like this would be a requirement for any online communications.

Discussing the future, the author points out how there is a need to diagnose what intelligences someone is strong and weak in to help nurture the weak and utilize the strong to great effect. He cautions, however, that different cultures can be perceived to place different emphases on different intelligences. The example he uses is how the American culture places a premium on independence and, thus, appears to have a preference and/or inclination towards intrapersonal intelligence. This is opposed to Japanese culture which places the premium on group dynamics and would seem to show a predilection towards interpersonal intelligence.

The author also discusses how six of the intelligences have curricula, but that the two emotional ones, inter- and intra-personal do not. While there is not set curricula for them, I do observe a hidden curriculum and how teachers often work with students to help improve their social skills and knowledge of self. I do wonder, however, if America with its belief that each person must build themselves will ever take a more nurturing approach to developing intelligences. I especially have to wonder if the codification of a curricula will ever take place for the two emotional intelligences.